

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

On 21 November 1991, the Senate authorized its Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology to "examine and report upon the Veterans Health Care Regulations and on all other matters concerning veterans affairs which may arise from time to time." This mandate was assigned to the Sub-Committee on Veterans Affairs under the Chairmanship of the Honourable Senator Jack Marshall. However, as the Sub-Committee prepared to investigate the Health Care Regulations, veterans across the country turned their attention in another direction. The Sub-Committee, keeping in mind its mandate, had little choice but to take notice.

*The Valour and the Horror*, directed and co-written by journalist Brian McKenna, was first aired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, in both official languages, in January 1992. Advertised as a documentary, the three-part series examined Canada's role in several notable military campaigns of the Second World War. The films were generally well received by arts and entertainment reporters and newspaper columnists. The first episode, *Savage Christmas: Hong Kong 1941*, covering the fall of Hong Kong in December 1941 and the tragedy that befell Canadian prisoners of war of the Japanese, was also favourably received by some veterans and veterans' organizations. However, the second and third films in the series, *Death by Moonlight: Bomber Command* and *In Desperate Battle: Normandy 1944* respectively, caused a groundswell of protest among veterans who claimed the two episodes were inaccurate and heavily biased. Canadians who had fought in the air war were particularly upset and began to develop detailed critiques of the film on the bomber offensive.

On 18 February 1992 the Metropolitan Toronto Branch of the Aircrew Association addressed an open letter to Parliamentarians and enclosed a brief 3 page review of the *Death by Moonlight: Bomber Command* segment. The tone of the critique was matter-of-fact and reasonable. It concluded:

Nothing can be done now to rectify the distortions in *Death by Moonlight: Bomber Command* but the members of the Aircrew Association hope and expect that greater care will be taken by the producers of any future films in this series, and that CBC-TV will test the authenticity of the data - and require a balanced presentation - in any future documentaries from this source before presenting them to the Canadian public.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Proceedings, 8A:6.